Volume 16, No. 12 April 2006

TRUTH ABOUT POWER IS SPOKEN HERE
WIP
WORKS IN PROGRESS

# WORKS IN PROGRESS

ESTABLISHED IN 1990 BY THE THURSTON COUNTY RAINBOW COALITION

## Postal Service forgoes democracy

### Consolidation plans will benefit big mailers at expense of citizens

**by Clint Burelson,**
**President of Olympia APWU Local**

The United States Postal Service plans to reduce service to many communities by consolidating mail canceling and sorting operations into just a few large hubs. The proposal to discontinue canceling mail in Olympia, and to move many mail operations to Tacoma on April 3, is part of a larger national restructuring where as many as 250 mail processing facilities may be closed and consolidated. These consolidation plans will benefit large corporate mailers at the expense of citizens, non-profit organizations, small businesses, and businesses of any size that require fast mail service to and from their customers.

The Postal Service provides first-class mail service at the same rates to citizens wherever they live and however far their mail has to travel. The relatively low cost of mailing a letter to someone in the same town helps to balance the more expensive cost of mailing a letter to the other side of the country. The Postal Service rate structure was historically designed to encourage the sharing of information at affordable rates to nurture a democratic culture. This service is too important to our country to have it be taken over, as have mostly all other media, by "market" principles, which invariably lead to corporate control.

However, out of public view, large mailers have lobbied and have been successful in securing discounts for their advertising-based mailings through "worksharing," the euphemistic name for the process by which companies perform functions, such as applying barcodes, sorting, and trucking, that would otherwise be performed by the Postal Service. Through "worksharing," – which is essentially outsourcing – the large mailers pay less than the regular citizen for using the mail. The "worksharing" discounts have been so large that it has caused the Postal Service to have continuous revenue problems, and has caused rates for the small mailers and citizens to rise unnecessarily in order to pay for the discounts to the big mailers.

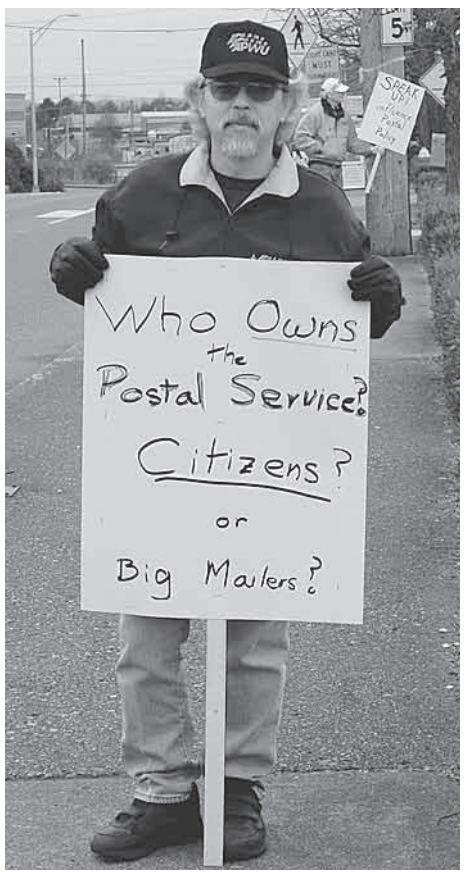
> A real democracy needs to provide support for the voice of the regular citizen. The Postal Service is one place that historically has provided that support.

With the Postal Service consolidation plans, the large mailers are hoping to capture more postal work and discounts by eliminating and/or consolidating as many as 250 mail processing facilities across the country. So, instead of processing the local originating mail locally, mail will be trucked miles away to be processed before returning to the same town for delivery. Not only is this more costly in terms of fuel and work time, it also results in delays in first class mail service. This design is inherently inefficient and benefits only large advertising-based corporations able to take advantage of the discounts.

**Privatization trends**

In general, the large mailers want as much of the Postal Service work turned over to

▸ **Postal Service** continued on page 9




Postal worker Guy Cruz on the picket line in downtown Olympia, protesting the outsourcing, downsizing and privatization of our public mail service. (*photo by Hap Newsom*)

## A matter of conscience

**by Kevin Benderman**

*On 28 July 2005, a US court-martial sentenced Sgt. Kevin Benderman to 15 months' imprisonment, after he refused to return for a second tour of duty in Iraq. Amnesty International considers him to be a prisoner of conscience, imprisoned solely for his conscientious objection to the war in Iraq. Benderman is currently incarcerated at the Regional Correction Facility at Fort Lewis.*

January 18, 2005 – Having watched and observed life from the standpoint of a soldier for ten years of my life, I always felt there was no higher honor than to serve my country and defend the values that established this country. My family has a history of serving this country dating back to the American Revolution, and I felt that to continue on in that tradition was the honorable thing to do.

As I went through the process which led to my decision to refuse deployment to Iraq for the second time, I was torn between thoughts of abandoning the soldiers that I serve with, or following my conscience, which tells me that war is the ultimate in destruction and waste of humanity.

Thoughts that we could, and should, consider better ways to solve our differences with other people in the world have crossed my mind on numerous occasions. And this was the driving force that made me refuse deployment to Iraq a second time. Some people may say I am doing so out of fear of combat; I am not going to tell you that the thought of going back to that place isn't scary, but that is not the reason for my decision to not return.

I want people to know that the longer I thought about just how stupid the concept of war really is, the stronger I felt about not participating in war. Why do we tell our children to not solve their differences with violence, then turn around and commit the ultimate in violence against people in another country who have nothing to do with the political attitudes of their leaders?

Having read numerous books on the subject of war and having heard all the arguments for war, I have come to the conclusion that there are no valid arguments for the destructive force of war. People are destroyed, nations are destroyed, and yet we continue on with war. The young people that I went with to the combat zone looked at it like it was a video game they played back in their childhood.

When you contemplate the beauty of the world around us and the gifts we have been given, you have to ask yourself, "Is this what humanity is meant to do – wage war against one another?" Why can't we teach our children not to hate or to not be afraid of someone else just because they are different from us? Why must it be considered honorable to train young men and women to look through the sights of a high-powered rifle and to kill another human being from 300 meters away?

Consider, if you will, the positive things that could be accomplished without war in our lives: prescription medication that is affordable for seniors, college grants that are available for high school seniors – I could name a list of reasons not to waste our resources on war. The most important being to let the children of the world learn war no more.

I've received e-mails from people who said that I was a coward for not going to war, but I say to them that I have already been to war, so I do not have anything to prove to anyone anymore. What is there to prove anyway – that I can kill someone I do not even know and who has never done anything to me? What is in that concept that anyone could consider honorable?

I first realized that war was the wrong way to handle things in this or any other country when I went to the war zone and saw the damage that it causes. Why must we resort to violence when things do not go our way? Where is the logic of that? I have felt that there are better ways to handle our business than to bomb each other into oblivion. When you are on the water in a boat and you have a chance to see dolphins playing with each other as they go about their business, you realize that if they can live without war, then humanity should be able to as well.

Can't we teach our children to leave war behind in history where it belongs? We realized that slavery and human sacrifice were obsolete institutions, and we left them behind us. When will we have the same enlightened attitude about war?

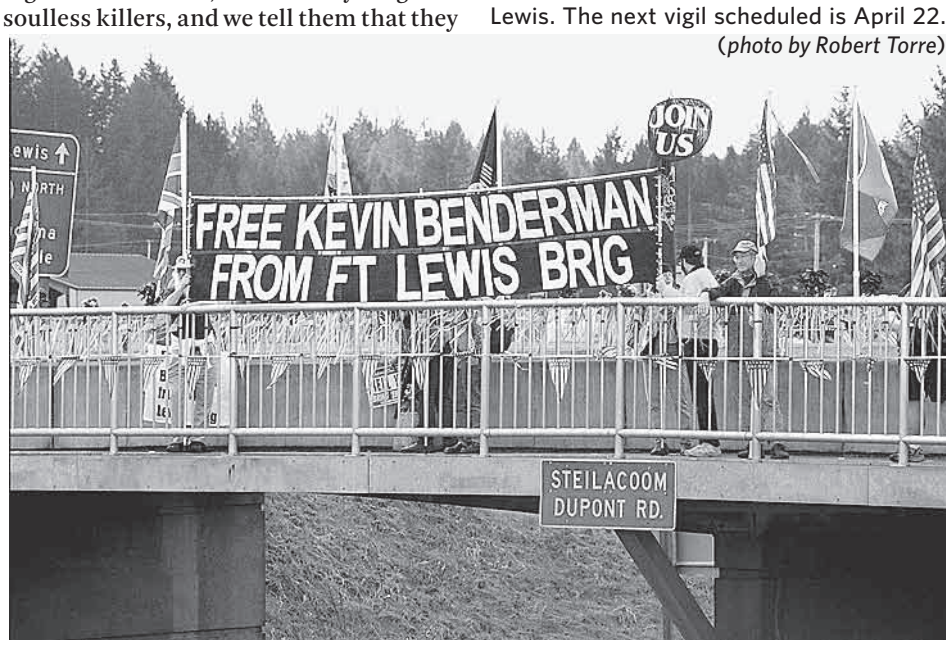
I look at my stepchildren and realize that war has no place with me in giving them what they need to survive the trials and tribulations of early adulthood. And if you look at all the time soldiers lose in the course of fighting wars, such as birthdays and anniversaries, their children going to the senior prom and college graduations, and other things that can never be replaced, then you have to come to the understanding that war steals more from people than just their sense of humanity – it also steals some of that humanity from their family.

I have learned from firsthand experience that war is the destroyer of everything that is good in the world; it turns our young into soulless killers, and we tell them that they are heroes when they master the "art" of killing. That is a very deranged mindset, in my opinion. It destroys the environment, life, and the resources that could be used to create more life by advancing our endeavors.

War should be left behind us; we should evolve to a higher mindset even if it means going against what most people tell us in this country, such as that we can never stop fighting with other people in the world. I have made the decision to not participate in war any longer, and some people in this country cannot comprehend that concept, but to me it is simple. I have chosen not to take part in war, and it was easy to come to that decision.

I cannot tell anyone else how to live his or her life, but I have determined how I want to live mine – by not participating in war any longer, as I feel that it is stupid and against everything that is good about our world.

Vigil for conscientious objector Kevin Benderman on March 25. Vigils are on 4th Saturday of each month, from noon to 2, at Exit 119, the Dupont–Steilacoom Rd overpass next to Fort Lewis. The next vigil scheduled is April 22. (*photo by Robert Torre*)



# WORKS IN PROGRESS

*Works In Progress* is a free, volunteer-operated progressive community newspaper based in Olympia, Washington. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of *Works In Progress* and are solely those of the authors.

**Submissions**
Please send text as Word attachments. Artwork and photos can be sent electronically or we can scan them for you as camera-ready/black & white.

*WIP* reserves the right to publish in whole or part all submissions. For editing purposes, please enclose your phone number.

Articles may be reprinted. Please cite source.

*If you don't see your issue being covered in* Works In Progress, *it's because you aren't writing about it! (Or aren't finding someone else to cover it!)*

Send submissions to *wip@zhonka.net* or mail to Works In Progress, PO Box 295, Olympia, WA 98507-0295.

**Governing Tool**
The following statement is part of the Editorial Policy and is the governing tool for the Anti-Discrimination Clause:

> WIP *will make every effort to work with the contributor of material considered by* WIP *to be offensive in order to reach a mutually agreed upon resolution, but* WIP *reserves the right as a last resort to edit or not print submitted material.*

**Mission Statement**
"Our aim is to confront injustice and encourage a participatory democracy based on economic, social, and environmental justice. *Works In Progress* is dedicated to providing a voice for those most affected by the exclusionary and unfair practices that seek to silence the oppressed."

**Anti-Discrimination Clause**
We will collectively endeavor to be sensitive and respectful to all those oppressed in this society, and their issues. However, if and when we should make a mistake in this regard, we expect to acknowledge it and to express regret for injury or insult given.

**Back Issues**
Get your catalog of indexed *WIP*'s below. Some back issues are available in the Timberland Library system. *WIP* is being archived on microfilm by the UW Library.


## WORKERS IN PROGRESS

| | |
|---|---|
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| Renee Cruickshank | Sylvia Smith |
| Christian DesMarets | Jeff Sowers |
| Drew Hendricks | Pat Tassoni |
| Teresa Jennings | Scott Yoos |
| David Lavender | Alice Zillah |

**On the cover:** Today's war refusers. *Top row, from left to right:* Diedra Cobb, Stephen Funk, Brandon Hughey, Abdullah Webster, Jeremy Hinzman, Carl Webb, Pablo Paredes, Katherine Jashinski, and Wilfredo Torres.

*In front of the American flag, from left to right:* Conscientious objectors Aidan Delgado, Kevin Benderman, and Camilo Mejía on the day of Benderman's court martial, 29 July 2005. Photo by Maritza Mejía. ***See story on page 1.***


**WIP Schedule**

**Submission Deadline: April 21**

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# UPCOMING EVENTS

## Not in Our Town, Not in Rachel's Name!
Sunday, April 2, noon
at Heritage Park

Pro-diversity rally sponsored by **Unity in the Community**, a coalition of groups and individuals committed to foster diversity and equality in our town.

We oppose neo-Nazi attempts to co-opt **Rachel Corrie**'s legacy of justice and peace.

Rachel was a daughter of our community who dedicated her life to a vision we share.

We are gathering Sunday in **Heritage Park** to re-affirm those values of inclusion, justice, and peace.

Please remember **Daylight Savings Time!**

*www.unityinthecommunity.org*

## Nicaraguan documentary on CAFTA
Film benefit for **Nica Greentruck Project**
Sunday, April 16th, 7:30 PM
Capitol Theater, downtown Olympia

Support Nicaraguan farmers' real struggle in the face of the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA).

***El Tigre Suelto & El Burro Amarrado*** ("The Tiger on the Loose & The Tied-up Donkey"), a documentary about CAFTA and its reality for small farmers. The title is a metaphor for US neoliberal trade policy (the tiger on the loose) attacking the common Latino farmer (the tied-up donkey). Spanish with English subtitles. 1 hour running time. Q&A and biofuels teach-in follows the film.

$4.50 OFS members/$7.00 general (no passes). Additional tax-deductible donations for Nica Greentruck Project graciously accepted. (Please make checks out/mail to NGP c/o SPEECH, 209 E 4th Ave, Olympia WA 98501)

The Nica Greentruck Project (NGP) is an international solidarity effort between Evergreen students and Nicaraguan farmers cooperating to combat poverty and build local food economies in Nicaragua, by creating a farmer-to-farmer, person to person exchange of information and technology on renewable energy transportation.

## Dinner w/Chencho & Ike Trevino
Fundraiser for the **Foundation for Self-Sufficiency in Central America** (FSSCA)
Friday, April 28, 5:30–7:30 PM, at Bill and Vicki Leonard's Home, 223 NW Foote St.

RSVP to Vicki at (360) 357-5030.

Kick off Arts Walk with a delicious Salvadoran dinner and walk 4 blocks to downtown Olympia for Arts Walk. Rides can also be provided. The purpose of the fundraiser is to support the many self-sufficiency projects in rural El Salvador and provide people an opportunity to talk to **Jose "Chencho" Alas** and FSSCA's new director, **Ike Trevino**.

Suggested donation: $25 for individuals and $40 for families.

FSSCA works in partnership and solidarity with low-income communities in Central America organized to achieve environmental sustainability, economic self-sufficiency, social justice, and peace. They assist in providing the financial, technical, and moral support needed for these communities to carry out their plans. The vision, initiative, organization, and implementation of the projects they support come directly from the communities with whom they work. For more information about the projects visit the website, *www.fssca.net*

## Aaron Dixon for Senate Kickoff Rally
Saturday, April 8, 6:00–9:00 PM
Garfield Community Center
2323 East Cherry St, Seattle

Special Guest: **Elaine Brown**
Food and Entertainment
contact: KL Shannon 206-250-5412
www.aarondixon.org
***(see related article on page 4)***

## The Future of Food
Free documentary followed by discussion
7:00 PM on April 7
Traditions Café, 300 5th Ave SW

Presented by OUT-GMOS (Olympian's United for Truth about Genetically Modified Organisms) in solidarity with the first Joint International GM Opposition Day (JIGMOD) on April 8 (*altercampagne.free.fr*). For more info: Patti at 236-9964, or *www.thefutureoffood.com*

## May Day Olympia 2006
Planning meetings for upcoming May Day events in Olympia. **Every Saturday at 5:00 pm at Yes Yes**, 320 4th Ave, downtown Olympia. For more information, email *maydayolympia06@riseup.net*

## Importance of Local Economies
Sunday, April 23, 2:00–4:00 PM
Olympia Unitarian Universalist Congregation, 2200 East End St NW, Olympia

The **OUUC Social Justice Committee**'s focus on "Consumerism with a Social Conscience" continues in April with a panel discussion with local business owners. We will have representatives from **Traditions**, **Olympia Supply Company**, **Orca Books** and **Left Foot Organics** on hand to give us a perspective of the challenges of being a locally-owned business in this era of global corporate domination.

Evergreen Academic Dean **Russ Fox** will also give us perspective on the economic impact of local businesses. Russ has studied community development, land use planning and participatory research.

We'll listen to the panel and then open it up for a discussion with the audience to give you an opportunity to ask questions. Please join us. It should be an interesting afternoon and of course, it's free and open to anyone.

## WROC Night Out
Monday, April 3, 5:30 potluck, 6–8 PM
First United Methodist Church
1224 Legion Way SE

Paint props, make signs, prepare for May Day action to celebrate parenting and protest full family sanction! Sponsored by Welfare Rights Organizing Coalition (WROC).

## Know Your Rights Clinic
Thursday, April 13, 1:30–2:30 PM
Family Support Center conference room, upstairs at 108 State Ave

Learn welfare law and how to be your own best advocate! Questions? Contact WROC at (360) 352-9716 or toll free at (866) 343-9716. *wrocoly@wroc.org* , *www.wroc.org*

## El Inmigrante
Saturday, April 8, 9:00 PM
The Capitol Theater, downtown Olympia

*El Inmigrante* is a documentary film that examines the Mexican and American border crisis by telling the story of Eusebio de Haro, a young Mexican migrant who was shot and killed during one of his journeys north.

The film presents a distinct humanitarian focus in which story and character take precedent over policy and empiricism.

*El Inmigrante*, has been selected to 24 film festivals and has won four best documentary awards. For more detailed information please visit the website, *www.elinmigrantemovie.com*

## Alliance for Democracy Movie Night presents *Life and Debt*
Sunday, May 7, 2006, 6:00 PM
Traditions Fair Trade (300 5th Ave)

The South Sound chapter of **Alliance for Democracy** is showing the documentary ***Life and Debt***. *Life and Debt* is a documentary about the economic results of IMF sanctions in Jamaica. 80 minutes.

For more information on the film, visit *http://imdb.com/title/tt0284262*

Discussion will follow the film.

# Sylvia's page

# Aaron Dixon vs. the status quo

## Seattle activist launches independent Senate campaign

**by Jesse Hagopian**

Aaron Dixon, a community activist for over 40 years and former head of the Seattle Black Panther Party, has announced his plan to run for the US Senate from Washington.

Dozens of supporters and news media packed the conference room at the Cannon House Assisted Living Residence in the Central District of Seattle to see Dixon launch his campaign. Running as the Green Party's candidate, he will be challenging incumbent Maria Cantwell, a Democrat elected by a razor-thin margin six years ago.

Speaking in front of a screen displaying the numbers of dead Iraqis and US soldiers, and which continuously updated the financial cost of the war in Iraq, Dixon said, "Not only has Ms Cantwell continued to support the war in Iraq, but she also has sided with John Ashcroft in using fear to rush through the so-called Patriot Act. And she recently voted for its renewal for four more years. I am running to bring the troops and the military equipment home now, and to use the billions of dollars in the war chest to rebuild America."

Referring to the recent polls indicating that a majority of Americans oppose the war in Iraq, Dixon vowed to his supporters, "We will organize a grassroots movement throughout this state that will serve notice to all politicians that the will of the people must be recognized, or you will be voted out of office."

Dixon's bid for the Senate is only the latest act in a lifetime of struggle for justice. By age 21, Dixon had marched with Martin Luther King Jr, founded the original Black Student Unions at Garfield High School and the University of Washington, and formed the first chapter of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in Seattle.

In 1968, during a visit to Seattle, Black Panther Party Chair Bobby Seale appointed Aaron Dixon to head the party's Seattle chapter – the first chapter outside of California.

As a member of the Panthers, Dixon helped found and implement five breakfast programs for low-income children, the first food bank in Seattle, the first free health care clinic (what is today known as the Carolyn Downs Clinic); he was also behind bringing the first Black Studies program to the University of Washington. Dixon moved to Oakland for some time, where he built the local chapter of the Panthers, worked on Bobby Seale's campaign for mayor, and served as Elaine Brown and Huey P. Newton's bodyguard.

Since the demise of the Panthers, Dixon has worked with youth in gang and drug rehabilitation. Currently, he is the executive director of Central House, a nonprofit Seattle organization that serves youth in a variety of ways, including providing transitional housing, and teaching leadership skills and media literacy.

Dixon's campaign for Senate is certain to receive local attention, since the race between Cantwell and Republican challenger Mike McGavick is expected to be close. But Dixon is already attracting the support of important Seattle community leaders.

Former Seattle School Board member, current Parent Teacher Student Association president and local counter-recruitment icon Amy Hagopian announced her support for Dixon. "As an elected Democratic Party precinct committee officer, I am endorsing Aaron Dixon for Senate," Hagopian said. "I wish Maria Cantwell was an antiwar candidate, but she's not. We need an antiwar candidate. I think she's a better Senator than her Republican opponent will ever be, but voting for war is an immoral act, and I can't do it. It's a violation of my beliefs, my status as a mother, and my profession as a public health worker."

> "If you are against the war, you can't have a candidate. If you are against the tax breaks for the rich, you can't have a candidate. If you are against the Patriot Act, you can't have a candidate. We won't let them silence us – we have a candidate now."

As with Ralph Nader and Peter Camejo's 2004 presidential campaign, the mainstream media are repeating the mantra that Dixon is a "spoiler" by taking votes from Cantwell.

But as Dixon's wife and campaign press liaison Farah Nousheen pointed out, "What the spoiler argument is really saying is that if you are against the war, you can't have a candidate. If you are against the tax breaks for the rich, you can't have a candidate. If you are against the Patriot Act, you can't have a candidate. We won't let them silence us – we have a candidate now."

Other community leaders agree that Dixon isn't a "spoiler" – and is, in fact, a voice for justice in a two-party system that has shut off debate about the war in Iraq and continues to do the bidding of corporations.

Speaking at Dixon's press conference, Dustin Washington, program director of the American Friends Service Committee's Cross-Cultural Youth Leadership Development and Action Program, brought the crowd to its feet when he declared, "The majority of the Democratic Party and Republican Party have proven themselves unfit to govern…Based on Cantwell's record of supporting war, it is clear that it is time for a change…It's time to send Maria Cantwell back into the private sector, and it's time to elect Aaron Dixon as our next United States senator."

*Printed with permission from the* Socialist Worker. *For more information about Aaron Dixon's campaign, go to* www.aarondixon.org *.*

Aaron Dixon with wife Farah Nousheen and son Zain.

# Maria Cantwell vs. her conscience

## Demonstrators screw up ideal photo-op for pro-war Democrat on Iraq War anniversary

**by Doug Nielson**

On Saturday March 18, Maria Cantwell and Barack Obama made a campaign appearance at Garfield High School in Seattle. Stand Up! Seattle made an appearance also displaying a banner that read, "MARIA CANT. SAY NO TO WAR" and "DON'T BARACK O BOMB IRAN." Our primary purpose was to expose Senator Cantwell for the unrepentant war criminal that she is.

We started by passing out leaflets outside the event but were told by security guards that the Cantwell campaign had rented the school grounds and was therefore able to throw us out. They said the fact that one of our members had a small "Impeach Bush" sign on his backpack and another member was holding a "No Iraq War" sign was evidence that we were protesters and that Cantwell was not allowing protesters. We were reminded of the last Democratic Party National Convention where delegates to the convention were thrown out for the smallest displays of anti-war sentiment.

As recently as January, the unrepentant war criminal Democrat Cantwell said of the Iraq war, "No, I don't think it was a mistake."

We decided that rather than be arrested for displaying our banner outside, we should keep it hidden, go inside, and wait for Cantwell to take the stage. We unfurled it at the beginning of her speech while reading aloud the names of Iraqi children killed in the war. Maria responded with a dismissive shrug. After about a minute we were surrounded by security guards and escorted out by the police.

We weren't the only people who protested this event. Several individuals stood with anti-war signs near the entrance to the gymnasium as people were filing in, until they were told to leave. We saw four different anti-war fliers being passed out before the event and inside the gymnasium.

A few minutes into Cantwell's speech, our banner was torn down, but other anti-war protesters held anti-war placards aloft for the remainder of her talk. Thanks to everyone who participated in this semi-spontaneous protest.

Cantwell tried to use Barack Obama and the historically Black Garfield High School as cover to slip into town at precisely the same time a large anti-war protest was happening downtown. She didn't pull it off. All the news articles and broadcasts that came out after the event mentioned our protest and the fact that Cantwell was avoiding the issue of the war. For example, KING5 TV began their segment on Cantwell with video of our banner and focused more on the protest against her than they did on her speech.

*The Stranger* began their coverage this way: "It was supposed to be a pep rally, an election-year excuse for getting Washington State's junior senator, Maria Cantwell, on stage with one of the Democrats' most popular figures, Senator Barack Obama of Illinois. The advance press materials said the topic of the day was education, but for a few tense minutes on Saturday, the otherwise well-scripted Cantwell campaign event was upended by an antiwar ambush."

In 2004 George Bush did not once try to make a campaign stop inside Seattle city limits. Some of us like to think our early and aggressive protest is what kept him at bay. Wouldn't it be great if war supporter Maria Cantwell were also to decide the only way to campaign here was through the TV set?

Banner unfurled as Maria Cantwell begins a speech at Garfield High School in Seattle. (Photo by Alexander King)

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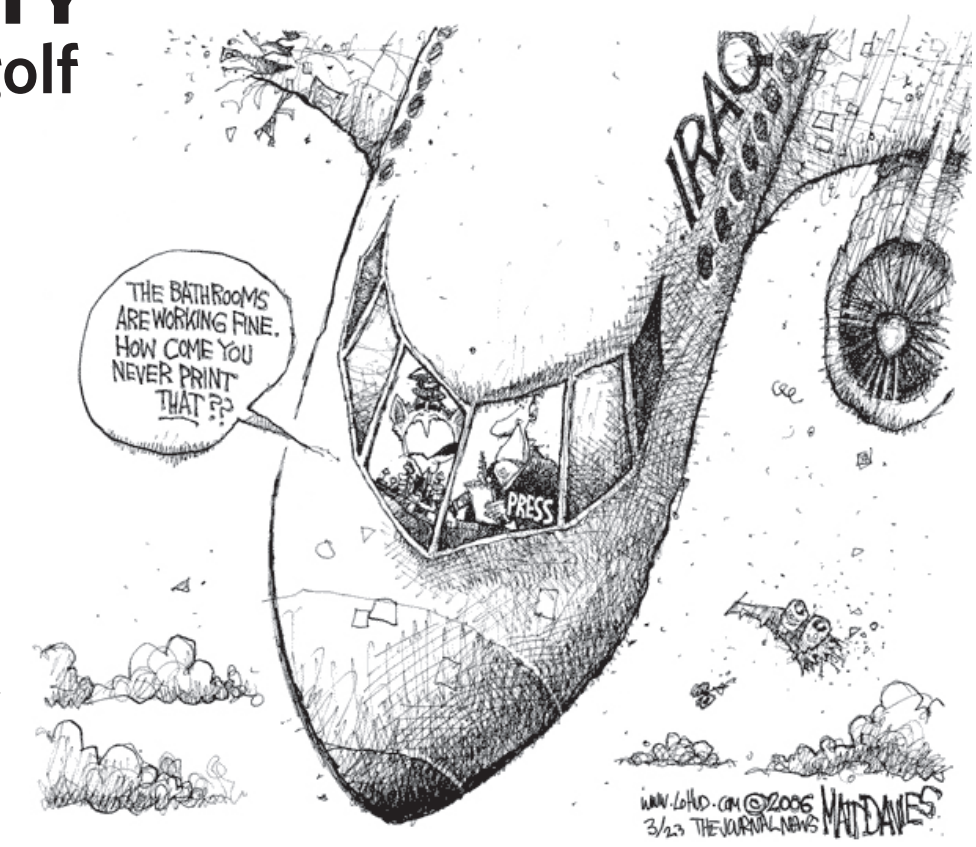
# BUSH & CHENEY VS. REALITY
## Making Iraq safe for miniature golf

**by Ralph Nader**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THE BATHROOMS ARE WORKING FINE. HOW COME YOU NEVER PRINT THAT??
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Attention please, good people! Adjust your routines and come to the aid of your country and your children with your thoughtful patriotism. Don't just hope for impeachment, demand the resignation now of the mad-hatters in the White House: George W. Bush and Richard Cheney.

Already, a large majority of you do not consider this shifty duo trustworthy. By more than two to one you disapprove of Bush's war in Iraq. Similar majorities believe this is also a President whose administrative incompetence – note the post-Katrina debacles compared to his promises last September in that devastated city of New Orleans – nearly matches his penchant for daily fabrications.

The precipitous drop in Bush's polls (Cheney's are even lower) is not coming from liberals who long ago registered negative in these national surveys. The drop is coming from millions of erstwhile Bush supporters… Bush voters… Bush-loving conservatives.

Why? Just look at or read the news everyday. There goes Bush and Cheney insisting that conditions in Iraq are getting better and better, when they are getting worse and worse. And Americans also know this because hundreds of thousands of soldiers and other personnel are rotating from Iraq back into every state and community and telling millions of people the truth.

Repeated reports from diverse official, media and eyewitness accounts say that there is less electricity, more disease, less drinkable water, less housing, far less street security, less health care, less gasoline, fewer jobs and far more violence against civilians after the Bush–Cheney–Rumsfeld invasion in March 2003 than before the sanctioned, tottering, besieged dictator, Saddam Hussein, was toppled.

With Bush's own ambassador to Iraq warning of a possible civil war and Bush's handpicked interim Iraqi prime minister, Ayad Allawi saying, "We are in a terrible civil conflict now," the serial delusionists, Bush and Cheney, having lied five ways into their war, go around daily as smarmy pollyannas spouting what Bush calls "a strategy that will lead to victory in Iraq."

Why, didn't you know about all the progress in Iraq? If only the media would report it, they both say again and again. Really! What about all the corruption by the many contractors, all the brutal militias that now often do their work wearing Iraqi soldier or police uniforms, all the bogus reconstruction, paid with billions of American taxpayer money? What about the spreading chaos that Bush has no intention of confronting, as international law requires invading occupiers to remedy. Remember Colin Powell's tight phrase – "We broke it, we own it," that sums up the global law on this subject.

Massive separation from reality frequently involves ordinary personalities with psychotherapy. Read the words of the *The Washington Post*'s respected columnist, Eugene Robinson:

> The people running this country sound convinced that reality is whatever they say it is. And if they've actually strayed into the realm of genuine self-delusion – if they actually believe the fantasies they're spinning about the bloody mess they made in Iraq over the past three years – then things are even worse than I thought.

He described Bush as "divorced from reality".

Worse still is the delusion that claims the Bush–Cheney War is not generating more terrorists. Mr. Bush doesn't listen to intelligence, military and diplomatic officials, or even to his CIA Director Porter Goss. Mr. Goss has testified that the US occupation is a magnet and a training ground for even more terrorists from outside and inside Iraq. Thereby, setting up a boomerang against our national security in the future.

One area, however, in Iraq is proceeding on schedule – the building of four massive, permanent super-bases, complete with American suburban amenities such as Pizza Hut, Burger King, miniature golf courses, theaters, swimming pools and even a football field. There is almost a news blackout about Balad Air Base, al-Asad Airbase and others, though not quite the blockage that the two White House draft-dodgers have placed on reporters trying to cover the return of the fallen soldiers to Dover, Delaware.

Senator Joe Biden (D–Delaware) spoke about the growing opposition by both Republican and Democratic Senators, to what can deliberately be called disinformation coming out of the Bush administration. Not to mention the refusal to respond at all to serious inquiries by members of Congress.

Unlike the Presidential ordering of military invasions that violate our domestic laws, our Constitution and international treaties to which the US is a signatory, massive delusion in the White House is not an impeachable offense. But it should be a cause for resignation driven by popular bipartisan demand. Bush and Cheney have arrayed their no-fault power, their political egos against the interests of our country. They are obsessively-compulsed.

Bush recently traveled to West Virginia and did not speak to the poverty among some of the hardest workers in America. He went to Ohio on Air Force One and ignored the huge loss of manufacturing jobs there to Mexico, China and other authoritarian nations. No, instead, he brings his gigantic sign, "Plan for Victory", stands in front of it and, as befits the Mayor of Baghdad, talks about his delusions in that oil-rich, devastated country.

Reality, good citizens, can fairly describe the dictatorial Bush and Cheney as psychiatrically challenged. Send them to the unemployment lines, where Halliburton and Exxon will certainly pick them up.

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# Olympia welcomes latest delegation from Santo Tomás

**by Mark Jaffe**

This spring, the Thurston–Santo Tomás Sister County Association (TSTSCA) will be welcoming our eighth delegation from our sister city in Santo Tomás, Chontales, Nicaragua. Our guests, Rosa Aura Segura, Facunda Zeledón Nuñez, and María Salvadora Gonzalez, will be in Olympia from April 19th until May 11th.

Formed as a response to the US-funded Contra wars in the eighties, TSTSCA works to create personal relationships that transcend the military and economic violence carried out by the United States. In 1979, after forty years of brutal dictatorship under the US-backed Somoza family, the Sandinista Liberation Front (FSLN) triumphed over Samoza's National Guard. Once in power, the Sandinistas implemented sweeping social reforms, the most popular of which was perhaps the Literacy Brigades that saw young students from Managua and other urban centers in Nicaragua go out to the countryside and teach *campesinos* to read and write. Unfortunately, the Reagan administration viewed the FSLN as the communist menace gaining a foothold on the American continent and went about trying to bring on its fall. Though deemed illegal by Congress, the CIA trained and supplied ex-National Guard soldiers to form a counter-revolutionary army, popularly known as the Contras. Throughout the eighties, the Contra forces wreaked havoc on the Nicaraguan population, and in 1990, faced with a choice of peace or continued bloodshed, the FSLN was voted out of office, signaling the first peaceful handing-over of power in Nicaraguan history.

Since 1988, TSTSCA has worked with the Center for Community Development (CDC) in Santo Tomás to foster a relationship of solidarity in the face of US intervention and oppression in Central America. Though rooted in the struggle against the Contras, TSTSCA believes that the economic oppression carried out by NAFTA, CAFTA, and such institutions as the IMF and World Bank is a form of violence as well, and solidarity continues to be necessary even though this is a kind of war that doesn't make as many headlines. Members of community and Evergreen student delegations have had the opportunity to go to Santo Tomás and see first-hand the day to day struggles that are a result of US foreign policy while at the same time be inspired by the tenacity and determination of our friends and comrades. Delegation members have the opportunity to work alongside Tomasino/as in various projects such as the Children's Free Lunch Program, which serves free meals to over one hundred kids a day; an organic farm, which grows food for the lunch program as well as to sell in the market; the Clínica Popular, or People's Clinic; and a wide range of other projects aimed at strengthening the community and promoting self-sufficiency. We are always welcomed into the homes of our hosts, and many of us consider the people we stay with to be family. These delegations from Santo Tomás are our opportunity to continue this cultural exchange and to introduce these people to our community here.

While here, our guests will be working on various projects in the community, hoping to gain some knowledge to be brought back with them to Santo Tomás as well as imparting knowledge to us and sharing some of their experiences with the community at large. Rosa Aura is a singer and guitar player as well as the director of the Children's Free Lunch Program in Santo Tomás. She will be performing several times during her stay here. Facunda is a first-grade teacher at Rubén Darío Elementary School in Santo Tomás, sister school of Lincoln Elementary, and will be spending the majority of her time at Lincoln working to strengthen the relationship between the two schools. María Salvadora is a doctor who works at the People's Clinic in Santo Tomás. She will be spending her time visiting various health care organizations in the area.

We can read all the books and articles we want, but the opportunity to meet and connect with the people whose lives are affected by the issues we read about, watch documentaries about, and protest about is a precious one. Please support TSTSCA and our guests by coming to the public events listed and help make this delegation as good, if not better, than the previous seven.

## Meet the delegates!

The **Thurston Santo Tomás Sister County Association** invites you to help welcome our eighth delegation (since 1990) from Santo Tomás, Chontales, Nicaragua. **Facunda Zeledón Nuñez**, **María Salvadora González**, and **Rosa Aura Segura** will be with us from April 19 until May 11. Please join us at the following public events:

**Bienvenida – Welcoming Party**
Friday, April 21, Traditions Café, 7 AM

Meet and greet our guests and enjoy some free entertainment and hors d'oeuvres.

**Excursión a Mt. Rainier**
Saturday, April 22

Meet at the Housing Authority parking lot across from Bayview Thriftway, 9 AM. to car-pool. Come play in the snow with our Nicaraguan guests at Mt. Rainier. Bring appropriate clothing, park entry fee, snow toys, and pack a lunch.

**Café Nica**
Sunday, April 30, 6:30 PM, location TBA

Our tomasina visitors will prepare traditional Nicaraguan food to serve as a fundraiser for community projects in Santo Tomás. The evening includes a performance by **Rosa Aura**.

**Despedida – Joining Hands – Juntos Somos un Volcán**
Sunday, May 7, 6:30 PM, Capitol Theater

An evening of revolutionary music & stories of Nicaragua. Join us for this gala event as these three community organizers from Santo Tomás share music & stories of their lives; **Lincoln Elementary students** and **Olympia's Citizens Band** will also perform. $6 for children under 12; $10 for OFS members, students & low-income; $12–30 (pay what you can) general admission.

*Questions? Call Anna at (360) 705-0258*

*Clockwise from far left:* Facunda Zeledón, María Salvadora, and Rosa Aura (center, with guitar)

# Two weeks in El Salvador with CISPES

## Olympians observe El Salvador elections

**by Patty Mosqueda**

Nearly two weeks in El Salvador, including elections day on March 12, was an intense learning experience for nine delegates from Olympia (many from The Evergreen State College) who participated in a tour organized by the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES). The nine Olympians – part of a delegation of 27 people from various cities in the United States – acted as international elections observers, and also met with social action groups to understand political and economic conditions in El Salvador. To no one's surprise, most of the "learning" was related to United States interventionist activities that impact El Salvador. In the various meetings and discussions over the two-week period, a range of human rights issues were discussed, including the activities surrounding the elections, as well as concerns related to CAFTA and ILEA.

**CAFTA**

CAFTA – the Central America Free Trade Agreement designed by the US to promote "free trade" in Central America – has produced deep concern among many in El Salvador. CAFTA was passed in El Salvador's legislative assembly in December 2004. It was introduced at a late night session, and its passage occurred within a few hours. There was no public discourse or debate about the effects of CAFTA, and members of the legislative assembly did not read the document. Following the passage of CAFTA by the legislative assembly, the United States imposed further demands by insisting that El Salvador amend 14 of its national laws and parts of the penal code to conform to CAFTA. These tactics are seen as a violation of El Salvador's right to national sovereignty.

Many people in El Salvador fear the effects of CAFTA, and opposition to the implementation of CAFTA is growing. Privatization of various public services under CAFTA, such as water and healthcare, would transfer control and profits to corporations. For example, the delegation met with Salvadoran union leaders representing workers in the public water system. These union people urge that CAFTA not be applied; they are worried not only about losing their jobs if water is privatized, but they also worry about the large numbers of low-income Salvadorans who likely will not be able to afford water – a necessity for sustaining life itself.

CAFTA's provisions also allow private ownership of intellectual property – with harmful consequences for many people. Access to medicines is one example. Currently, many generic medicines are available and are less expensive than brand-name drugs. However, under CAFTA, corporations could own the rights to medicines, making it illegal to produce generic alternatives. Poor peoples' ability to afford medicines would be in jeopardy; already, in fact, access to medicine is out of the reach of the majority of Salvadorans. Another example: Ownership of intellectual property rights could adversely impact the "informal" sector – which is made up of people who set up small stands in the streets to sell various items, usually small things like food, music CDs, videos, etc. A large portion of "employed" people in El Salvador are those who work in the informal sector, and they have begun to organize to oppose CAFTA. Their concern is that under CAFTA the sale of copyrighted materials – such as CDs – could become a criminal offense with a punishment of up to six years in prison if convicted. People work in the informal sector because other employment opportunities are nonexistent. Without the informal sector, they could not feed their families. CAFTA's potential impact for workers in the informal sector would amount to criminalization of the poor.

The concept of "free trade" embodied in CAFTA would be devastating for small producers – that is, the people and families with small farms or small businesses. "Free trade" would allow El Salvador's markets to be flooded with goods and products produced elsewhere, and sold more cheaply than goods produced in El Salvador. The delegation met with members of a rural farm cooperative, and the cooperative told about the expected hardships that would result when they could not sell corn and beans in El Salvador's own markets. They know that small farmers will not be able to compete with mass-produced products from abroad. Members of the cooperative had met with government officials to explain their concern, and ask what they could export to the US. The response from the government was: sell your pupusas (made with tortillas) and orchata (a drink made from grains). In other words, the officials made a joke about the gravity of the situation for poor people.

**ILEA**

ILEA, the "International Law Enforcement Academy," will be established through funding from the United States as a police training school in El Salvador. ILEA is the latest manifestation of US presence in the country – which also includes a US military base, FBI office and DEA office. ILEA can be viewed as a partner with CAFTA – in this partnership CAFTA provides the mechanism for the imposition of privatization and free trade, and ILEA provides police training for purposes of intimidating and silencing opposition to CAFTA.

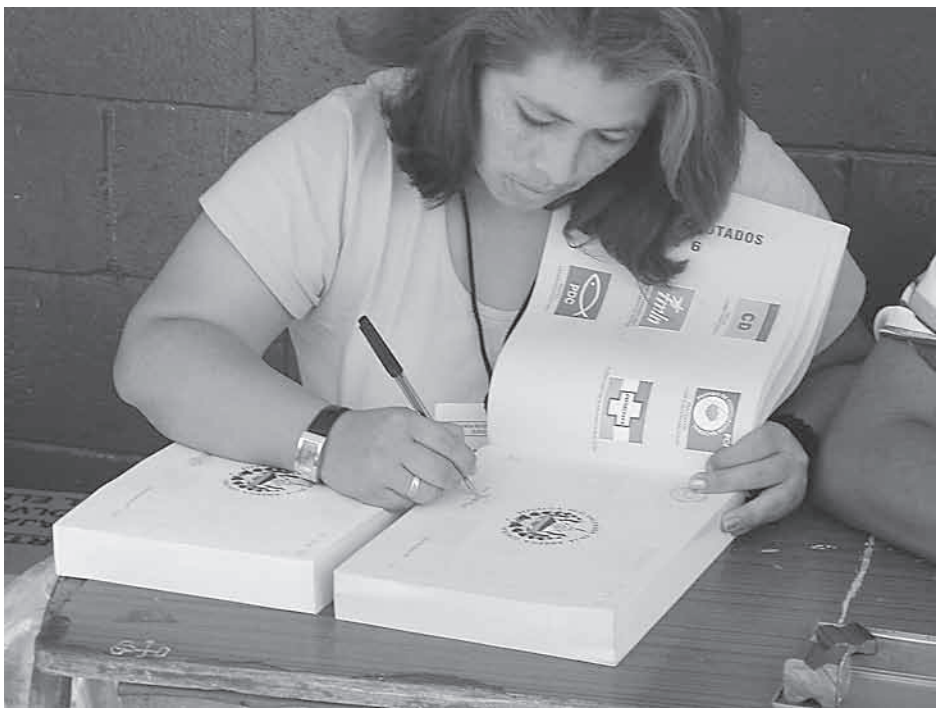
Members of the delegation heard many speakers voice opposition and concern about the imposition of ILEA. The speakers, representing social action groups, oppose CAFTA and other forms of US domination, and they already endure increased repression, including the recent death of a union organizer and the disappearance of the son of a leader of a social activist group. ILEA will magnify the intimidation.

> As the delegation relayed concerns about the elections...and the erosion of human rights... the "political assistant" became visibly angry and eventually stormed out of the meeting.

**The elections**

Sunday, March 12, 2006, was the day of voting in El Salvador. Elections were held to choose mayors and council members in 262 municipalities, and to select a total of 84 deputies to the national legislative assembly. (In addition, the elections also selected deputies for the Central American Parliament. However, this was not a Presidential election.) The two major parties in El Salvador campaigned intensely. The FMLN (Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front), the party of the left, includes many who fought against the government during the revolution of the 1980s (the fighting war ended in 1992). ARENA, the party of the right well known for death squads and disappearances of civilians, currently controls the presidency of El Salvador and is seen as a conduit for US domination. Several smaller parties participated in the elections, but most were allied with ARENA.

The importance of the elections was underscored during presentations for the delegation by speakers from several El Salvadoran social action groups. Speakers noted that outcomes of the elections would be pivotal in determining the direction of the country. The result of the elections would influence the implementation of CAFTA and affect social policies in general – particularly policies regarding access to healthcare, water, employment and education. Fearing the increased repression posed by ARENA and its policies of privatization and acquiescence to US demands, social action groups focused their efforts on increasing the numbers of FMLN candidates winning the elections.



Salvadoran election official signing the back of a ballot for validation. Photo by Clara Waloff, CISPES delegate from New York.

On election day, all members of the delegation spent the entire day at one or more voting locations – starting at 6 AM and staying until votes were counted, as late as 9 PM. Each location, often in the courtyard of a school, had a number of voting stations (or tables); some had over 60 stations. The delegation members had been certified by El Salvador's Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) and were given identification badges. As such, they were allowed to witness and observe all activities at the voting sites – taking pictures and documenting activities. A pervasive impression among the delegation involved the large numbers of "vigilantes" (observers/helpers) at each station associated with political parties. In addition to the five official vote coordinators from the parties assigned to each voting station, each party could have one or two "vigilantes." But much of the time the numbers appeared to be larger – particularly "vigilantes" associated with the ruling ARENA party. "Vigilantes" had considerable interaction with voters; in some cases they showed voters where to sign or helped insert ballots into the ballot box – violations of the electoral code. Another observation of the delegation during the voting process was the lack of true secrecy. A voter marked his/her paper ballot with a large X on the logo of the chosen party. The voting booth was a cardboard platform with minimal screening on three sides, but open behind the voter – making it easy, in many cases, to see how an individual voted.

Members of the international delegation discovered other questionable activities on election day, including, in one instance, under-reporting of FMLN votes on the official tally sheet. Some ARENA vigilantes also told delegation members that they were forced to be part of the elections process, or lose their jobs. And some vigilantes were paid by ARENA to work at the polling place. There were reports (although delegation members were unable to observe this directly) that the ruling party had transported several busloads of people from Honduras and Guatemala (and possibly Nicaragua) into El Salvador to vote illegally.

However, the more egregious irregularities likely occurred before the day of the election. The President of El Salvador openly campaigned for several months for ARENA, of which he is a member. In El Salvador it is prohibited by law for the President, who is the head of the military, to campaign. The FMLN filed a grievance protesting the President's actions. Furthermore, there were questions concerning the voter registration lists. Prior to voting day, only the ruling ARENA party had access to the lists; no other party was able to authenticate the names on the lists. There were reports that deceased voters were still on the list, and that they voted. Perhaps this allowed non-citizens, from Honduras or elsewhere, to vote?

The final results of the election for the national legislative assembly show that ARENA received 34 assembly deputies, while the FMLN received 32 deputies. The remainder of the winning deputies were distributed among three smaller parties allied with ARENA. Neither the FMLN nor the ARENA party have a majority in the assembly, but ARENA's alliances with smaller parties will provide support for its political agenda. However, the lack of a super majority for ARENA will reduce the possibility of changing some constitutional laws that would require the approval of two-thirds of the deputies.

The most controversial mayoral race occurred in the capitol, San Salvador. After three days of "counting" the votes (which led to street protests by FMLN supporters who suspected the results were being tampered with, and aggression by the police against the demonstrators), the electoral council finally declared the FMLN candidate as the winner – by just 44 votes – even though exit polls showed that the FMLN was heavily favored. Questions about the conduct of the elections will continue to be raised.

**After the elections**

Members of the delegation had two culminating activities on March 14: a press conference, and a meeting with the US Embassy. The press conference was attended by several media outlets, including both television and newspapers. The delegation felt it was important to publicize some of the concerns about the day of the election, and about the questionable campaign tactics of the ruling party and the President himself. The press conference was featured on the evening TV news, and was the subject of an article in at least one newspaper.

A meeting with the US Embassy representatives was an opportunity to express the concerns that the members of the delegation had formulated while in El Salvador. Concerns included not only the conduct of the elections, but also the erosion of human rights that has alarmed social action groups in El Salvador. The tenor of the meeting with the "political assistant" of the Embassy began politely. But as members of the delegation relayed concerns about the elections, and more specifically, concerns and objections about the erosion of human rights embodied in both CAFTA and ILEA, the "political assistant" became visibly angry – and eventually stormed out of the meeting. For the delegation, it was a clear statement about the US government's attitude toward its own citizens, and toward the people of El Salvador.

*La lucha continua!*

*More information on El Salvador and CISPES is available at* www.CISPES.org. *For local Olympia information, call 867-6513.*

# REST EASY, BILL CLINTON: Milosevic can't talk anymore

**by Jeremy Scahill**

Slobodan Milosevic is characterized in the obituaries as the "Butcher of the Balkans." If that is the story you want to read about, please go to almost any other media outlet and read it again and again. Some are now suggesting that death is Milosevic's final revenge, that he "ended up cheating history" by dying before judgment was passed. But the world has already passed judgment on Milosevic and what is being cheated by his death is history itself.

What the corporate media overwhelmingly ignores in Milosevic's death is what they ignored in his life as well – his intimate knowledge of US war crimes in Yugoslavia. While Milosevic was undoubtedly a war criminal who deserved to be tried for his crimes, he was also the only man in the unique position of being able to expose and detail the full extent of the US role in the bloody disintegration of Yugoslavia in the 1990s. In fact, that is precisely what he was fighting to do at his war crimes trial when he died.

Because of the rule of victors' justice in the ad hoc tribunal system (a poor and unfair substitute for a true international court), Milosevic's case would have been the only international trial to potentially expose the details of the illegal, US-led NATO bombing of Yugoslavia for 78 days in 1999. While the US-backed court consistently tried to limit Milosevic's right to speak, stripping him of his right to self-representation, Milosevic battled regularly to raise US war crimes. Sadly, with Milosevic will likely die the last hope the victims of these crimes in Yugoslavia had of getting their day (if it could even be called that) in court – a tragic and unjust reality to begin with – that speaks volumes about the twisted state of international justice.

Milosevic's cause, regardless of what one thinks of it, was a casualty of 9/11 – an event that relegated him and his trial to the annals of history before it was even over. Most people in the world – with the exception of those in the Balkans where the proceedings were broadcast live, daily – probably didn't even know Milosevic was still on trial in the Hague. It became an obscure sideshow to the blood and gore unfolding constantly on the international stage.

Milosevic's death means that those who bombed Yugoslavia for 78 days beginning 7 years ago this month, killing thousands, will be once and for all protected from any public scrutiny for their crimes. However opportunistic Milosevic may have been, he would have been one of the few people to appear at the Hague that could have – and would have – laid out these crimes in great detail. Now, there is almost certain to be no condemnation of the US bombing of Radio Television Serbia, killing 16 media workers, the cluster bombing of the Nis marketplace, shredding human beings into meat, the use of depleted uranium munitions and the targeting of petrochemical plants causing toxic and chemical waste to pour into the Danube River. There will be no condemnation of the bombing of Albanian refugees by the US or the deliberate targeting of a civilian passenger train or the bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade. Milosevic also would have discussed how the US supports a regime in Kosovo that has systematically expelled Serbs, Romas and other ethnic minorities from their homes and burnt down scores of churches. He would have discussed the role of the US in funding and arming the Kosovo Liberation Army, which operates like a death squad and how the new prime minister of Kosovo, Agim Çeku, is a US-trained war criminal who gained infamy in both the Bosnian war and the 1999 Kosovo conflict. And Milosevic would have talked of the US interference in the Yugoslav elections in 2000 and the ultimate neoliberal takeover that was the aim of Clinton's sanctions and 78 days of bombing. In reality, it would have fallen on deaf ears, but it would have been stated for the record.

Milosevic's death means that those who bombed Yugoslavia for 78 days beginning 7 years ago this month, killing thousands, will be once and for all protected from any public scrutiny for their crimes.

It is ironic that Milosevic's last legal battle was an attempt to compel his old friend turned nemesis Bill Clinton to testify at his trial. If successful, Milosevic would have grilled the man who was US president through the entire Yugoslav war in what would have been a fiery direct examination. Clinton and Milosevic were once pals who talked collective strategy in the 1990s. Milosevic had many damning stories to tell and, without a doubt, uncomfortable questions to ask Clinton. The judges in Milosevic's case clearly worked to keep those moments from ever happening and the US government made clear its forceful opposition to such subpoenas of US officials, even considering invading a country that would put a US official on trial. With or without Clinton, Milosevic's defense would have brought to light some serious documentation of US war crimes and he died, muzzled, before he really got started.

Little attention, therefore, has been paid to Milosevic's long-term efforts – which predated 9/11, the 1999 NATO bombing and his own trial – to expose the presence of al Qaeda in the Balkans, from Bosnia to Kosovo. With 9/11, Milosevic's talk of al Qaeda was easily dismissed as laughable, pathetic opportunism. But those who followed Milosevic's career and more importantly the events of the 1990s in Yugoslavia know it was none of those. Those allegations were based on true events the US does not want discussed in an international court. Following the defeat of the Soviets in Afghanistan in the 1980s, many Mujahadeen eventually turned their sights on Yugoslavia where they went to fight alongside the Bosnian Muslims against the Orthodox Serbs and Catholic Croats. Once again, the US and bin Laden were on the same team. To this day there are reports of training camps in Bosnia, which remains under occupation. It is also a likely training ground for future blowback.

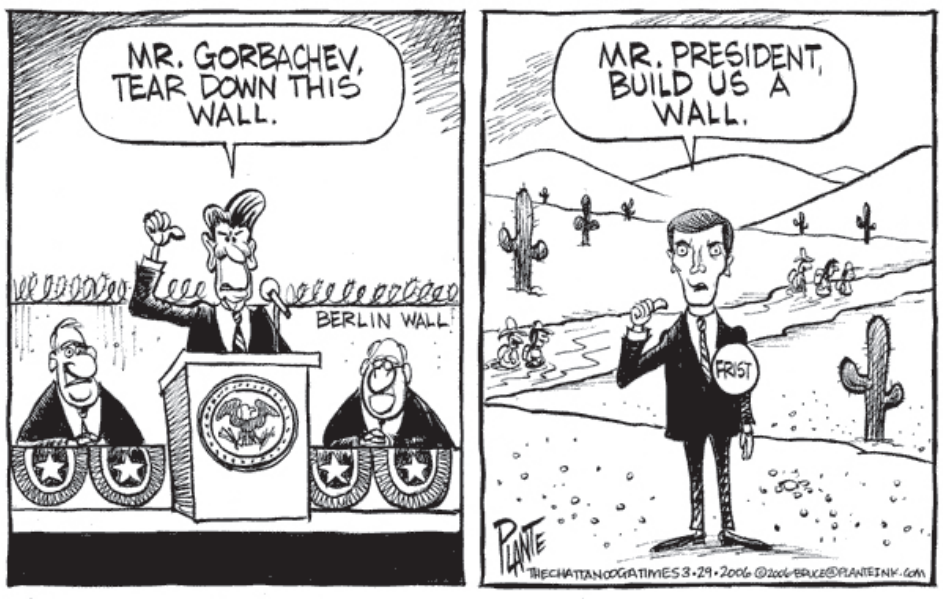
In his opening statement, Milosevic alluded to some of the information he would introduce during his defense. "In 1998 when [Clinton envoy Richard] Holbrooke visited us in Belgrade, we told him the information we had at our disposal, that in Northern Albania the KLA is being aided by Osama bin Laden, that he was arming, training, and preparing the members of this terrorist organisation in Albania. However, they decided to cooperate with the KLA and indirectly, therefore, with bin Laden, although before that he had bombed the embassies in Kenya and Tanzania [and] had already declared war." Milosevic concluded that "one day all this will have to come to light, these links."

That, however, is unlikely and more so now that Milosevic is dead.

To be sure, there will never be indictments of these US war criminals at the Hague: Bill Clinton, Madeline Albright, Jamie Rubin, William Cohen, Sandy Berger, Richard Holbrooke and Wesley Clark. For many of Serbia's victims of US war crimes, Milosevic's trial was a "Hail Mary" pass, as awful of an historical irony as that is, aimed at someone recognizing their forgotten suffering.

It is a sad testimony to the state of international jurisprudence that after many attempts to find justice, the only hope for US victims in the Yugoslavia wars was the trial defense of a man many of those same victims despised. If there was an independent international court that was recognized and respected by the US, those responsible for bombing Yugoslavia would have been alongside Slobodan Milosevic in the docks these past years instead of having their responsibility being buried with him.

*Printed with permission. Jeremy Scahill is an independent journalist who spent extensive time reporting from Yugoslavia, including covering the 1999 US-led NATO bombing from the ground. The night Milosevic was arrested in Belgrade, Scahill was beaten by the former president's supporters outside Milosevic's residence. He has also reported from Milosevic's trial in the Hague. Scahill is currently a Puffin Writing Fellow at The Nation Institute. He can be reached at* jeremy@democracynow.org .




## Olympia Workers Questionnaire

The Olympia Workers questionnaire is an effort by the Olympia Workers Association to learn more about the workplace conditions and challenges members of our community are facing. Look for the questionnaire around town and in the next issue of the Voice of Olympia.

Questionnaires can be dropped off at the following locations:

Last Word Books
211 4th Ave
Downtown Olympia

Olympia Food Co-Op (Westside)
402 Rogers St NW

Olympia Food Co-Op (Eastside)
1234 Pacific Ave

SPSCC Student Union Building
South Puget Sound Community College

Evergreen Labor Center
Seminar 2, Room 315
The Evergreen State College

or mailed to:

Olympia Workers Association
1320 8th Ave. SE
Olympia, WA 98501

SOUTH SOUND
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***speech@olywa.net***
***www.olywa.net/speech***

# Another fallen friend and martyr

## *The death of Tom Fox and a true test of solidarity*

**by Joe Carr**

*On March 10, 2006, the deceased body of Tom Fox was found in Baghdad. Fox had been working in Iraq with the Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT), documenting human rights abuses and providing assistance to the people of Iraq. On November 26, 2005, Fox and three CPT colleagues were abducted by a group that demanded the release of all prisoners held in Iraq. The remaining three CPT captives were freed on March 23.*

March 12, 2006—I first met Tom Fox in Chicago at a Christian Peacemaker Teams training, and we became good friends through our work together. He was a father with children about my age, and was like an uncle to me.

He was my team's coordinator during my month in Iraq. Shaggy, a young Iraqi friend and translator, nicknamed him "Uncle Tom" because of his paternal but playful manner. He provided a calm and steady presence, and an open and compassionate ear. His warmth and humor helped me to hang on through my depressing and fearful time in Iraq.

I remember the comforting sound of Tom's recorder, which he played in place of his clarinet. I will miss the mornings when he led worship, often in the silent Quaker tradition.

Tom was truly committed to maintaining an international presence in Iraq despite the danger. He understood the privilege we have in being able to choose whether or not we face violence, a choice denied to Iraqis, Palestinians, and poor people of color around the world. His commitment to solidarity led him to Iraq, to share in some of that risk.

Dozens of Iraqi bodies show up in Baghdad each week. Many are killed by US-sponsored death squads, trained to use brutal counter-insurgency tactics against militants and civilians alike. In the chaos of occupied Iraq, thousands of Iraqis have been kidnapped for profit. But we only hear about it when it happens to internationals.

I was standing with 23-year-old American activist Rachel Corrie on March 16, 2003, when an Israeli soldier intentionally drove over and crushed her to death with a US-made Caterpillar bulldozer. A month later, I was with 22-year-old British activist Tom Hurndall, helping to move Palestinian children out of the line of Israeli sniper fire when that sniper purposefully shot Tom in the head.

As we mourn for Tom Fox, let us remember the 100,000–250,000 Iraqis murdered by US occupation forces, and the 15,000-17,000 Iraqi hostages, held without charge in US and Iraqi detention facilities.

The loss of my comrades hurts very much, and it scares me to be so close to our few western martyrs. But my pain and fear only deepens my sense of solidarity and determination to continue their legacy of struggle.

Iraqis, Palestinians, and oppressed people everywhere are fighting and dying for freedom, and it's long past time for Americans to join them. We must take risks and be willing to sacrifice some of our privilege; a privilege built on the backs of millions. We must remain focused on the true source of this violence and suffering, US-led capitalist imperialism.

Let us grieve for our loss, together with families everywhere whose loved ones have fallen. Let us also continue the legacy of Tom Fox, Tom Hurndall, and Rachel Corrie, to build a global solidarity movement for peace, justice, and freedom.

Let us see to it they do not die in vain.

Tom Fox in 2005. (courtesy Christian Peacemaker Teams)


Rachel Corrie Foundation

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**DIANA BUTTU** advisor to the Palestinian Negotiation Team

**AMIRA HASS** Israeli journalist for Ha'aretz

**MUSTAFA BARGHOUTI** Prominent Palestinian leader and physician

**LIAT WEINGART** Co-director of Jewish Voice for Peace, San Francisco

**JERRY & SIS LEVIN** Volunteer with Christian Peacemaker Team in Hebron and director of Children of Abraham Interfaith Education for Peace Project

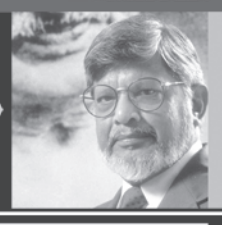
**LAMA HOURANI** Palestinian feminist from the Gaza Strip

**SARA ROY** Harvard professor, author of Gaza Strip: Political Economy of De-development

**HUWAIDA ARRAF** Co-founder of International Solidarity Movement

April 20, 2006
SPECIAL EVENT
ARUN GANDHI
*Free to the public*
Washington Center for the Performing Arts | Olympia, WA

ARUN GANDHI is the fifth grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, social-political activist, and founder of the M.K. Gandhi Institute for Non-Violence, Memphis, Tennessee.



Information | Registration
www.RachelCorrieFoundation.org

BRICK Building Revolution by Increasing Community Knowledge
www.spsccbrick.org


▸ **Postal Service** continued from page 1

the private sector as possible. In theory, the discounts they get simply reflect the work they have done to sort the mail. But the mail from the big mailers still needs to be processed, sorted, and delivered with the rest of the mail. The discounts awarded are far deeper than the costs the publishers have "saved" the Postal Service. In reality, they amount to a subsidy for big mailers—a subsidy paid for by the average stamp buyer.

The excessive discounts for the large mailers have reduced the Postal Service role and dramatically increased the private sector role in the mailing industry. Corporate CEOs laud a reduction of the Postal Service budget as a savings to the public, but in reality it is a transfer of work and income to the corporations. The corporations generally have this work performed by workers who are paid far less than postal workers, so the process destroys good jobs and replaces them with low-wage ones.

The big mailers hope to secure this arrangement by closing and consolidating of mail processing facilities, which will make it difficult to return mail processing functions to the Post Office. The Postal Service is also closing small post offices. In fact, over 200 small post offices have been closed in the last two years.

For the average citizen, the Postal Service consolidation plans mean a reduction in mail service, higher costs for the reduced service, and a loss of union-covered living wage job opportunities. The loss of living wage jobs will hurt our communities in turn.

The reduction in mail service and higher cost for using the Post Office will also mean a reduction in equality and will harm small business owners and non-profit organizations. Many small non-profit organization and small businesses will find it increasingly difficult to use the mail for their communication needs if the service is slow and expensive. In the magazine business, the big mailers like Time-Warner will be better able to discourage competition if the smaller mailers have to pay more for their mailings.

Perhaps most importantly, the plans to dismantle the Post Office will mean a reduction in democracy. Higher costs for small mailings will reduce the ability of citizens to communicate through the mail. Corporate media, no matter how many channels, is still corporate media. A real democracy needs to provide support for the voice of the regular citizen. The Postal Service is one place that historically has provided that support.

**Inadequate media coverage**

The story of how large corporations are benefiting and the average citizen losing in the Postal Service consolidation plans is not being adequately covered by the corporate media, because many of the large mailers who will benefit from the consolidation plans are also the large media corporations that provide most of the news to the country. Time Warner, which owns CNN and many other media sources of information, is the most obvious example. *Newsweek*, *Reader's Digest*, and other large media mailers also support consolidation and cannot be expected to tell the story from the general public's viewpoint.

Concerned citizens and organizations should contact their government representatives. If enough people are vocal, the consolidation plans and reduction in service can be stopped, and the Postal Service returned to its role as a public service.

**More information online**

More information on the consolidations happening across the country can be found at *www.apwu.org*, *www.lunewsviews.com* and at *www.postalmag.com*. Specific information on the Olympia consolidation can be found at *www.lunewsviews.com/olympia* and at *www.postalmag.com/olympia* respectively.

# When you see petitioners for clean energy, sign!

**by Chris Stegman**

Initiative 937 is collecting signatures across Washington to get clean, renewable energy on the November ballot. The initiative will help Washington's economy, environment, and rural communities by requiring electric utilities to purchase 15 percent of their power from new renewable resources by 2020 and improve the energy efficiency of homes and businesses.

Fossil fuels pollute our air and water and contribute to global warming, and their increasing costs are hurting consumers. Thankfully, we can stabilize prices while protecting our health and the environment by diversifying our power supplies with home-grown renewable energy, such as wind and solar.

You can get involved in this exciting effort to fight global warming by volunteering to get I-937 on the ballot. The campaign organized by Washingtonians for Energy Security need help to gather 160,000+ volunteer signatures to qualify I-937 for the 2006 ballot.

Sam Garst, one of the volunteer local coordinators of the petition drive, reports that "In the first two weeks of the campaign Thurston County has taken the lead in Washington with the number of signatures turned in. With only 4% of Washington's population, we have 20% of the signatures and 6 public petition collectors in the top 50 statewide. But, we have a long way to go to reach our local target of 20,000 Thurston Co. signatures."

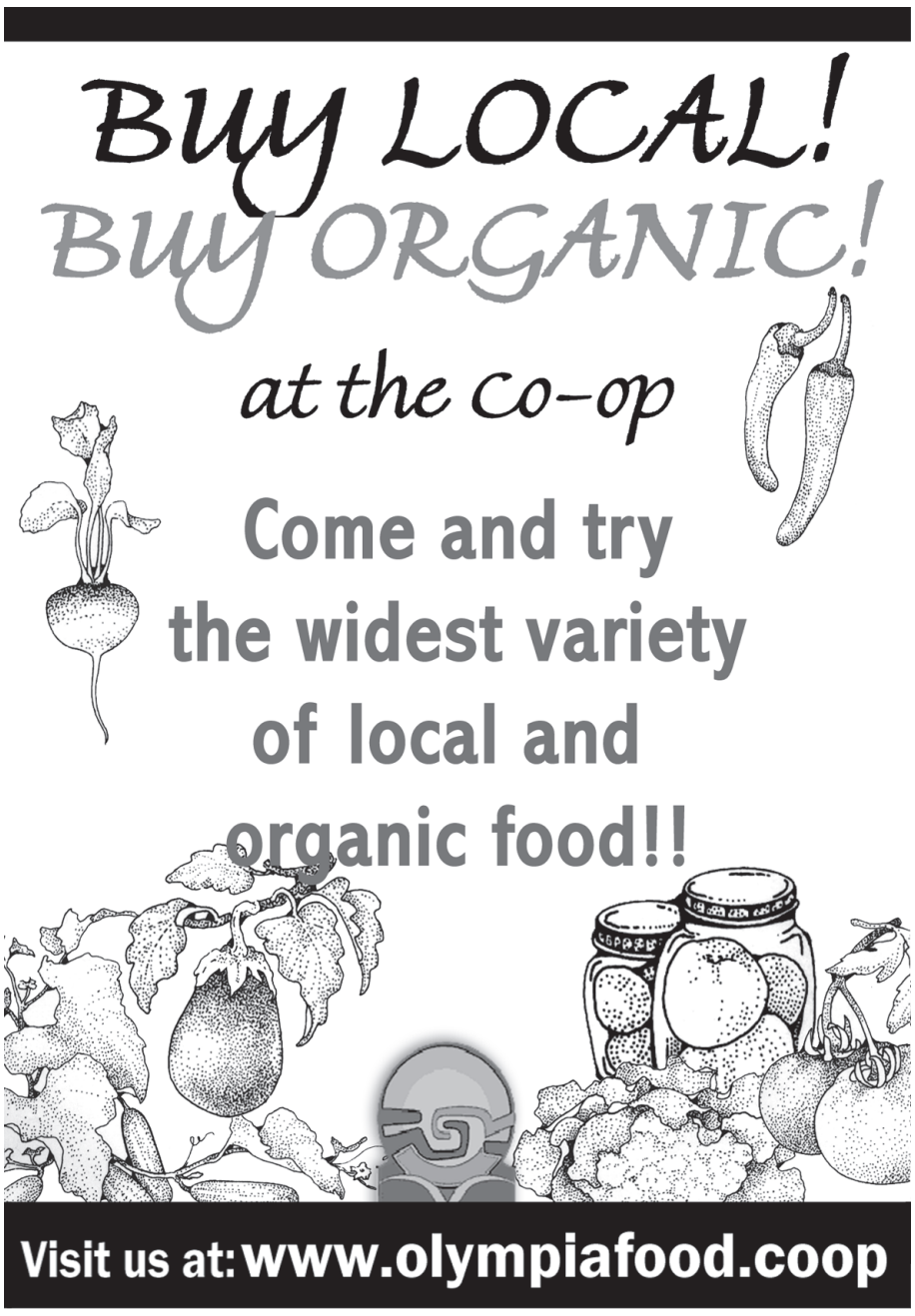
The Sierra Club, Audubon Society, United Steelworkers, and Climate Solutions have endorsed the initiative. Polling shows that 75% of voters will vote for clean, renewable energy if I-937 gets on the ballot. "To date, 21 states, including Texas, have some form of clean, renewable electricity requirement. It is time for Washington to join other states in the fight against global warming." says Garst.

In addition to taking a meaningful step to fight climate change, passing the initiative will:

- Create jobs
- Boost the state's economy
- Reduce our dependence on foreign and polluting energy sources
- Support farmers and rural communities
- Not raise taxes

You can help by collecting signatures at events and stores with other volunteers – as well as gathering signatures from friends, family and colleagues. But most important, when you see a petition gatherer, go over and sign!

To get involved in Thurston County, contact Sam Garst at 491-9469 or *SamGarst@aol.com* or Chris Stegman at *c.stegman@comcast.net* . You can also contact the Campaign Headquarters at 206-283-3335 or visit *www.yeson937.org* to get involved.



The Co-op accepts applications for employment at all times, whether we have openings or not.
Visit our website for more information. **www.olympiafood.coop**

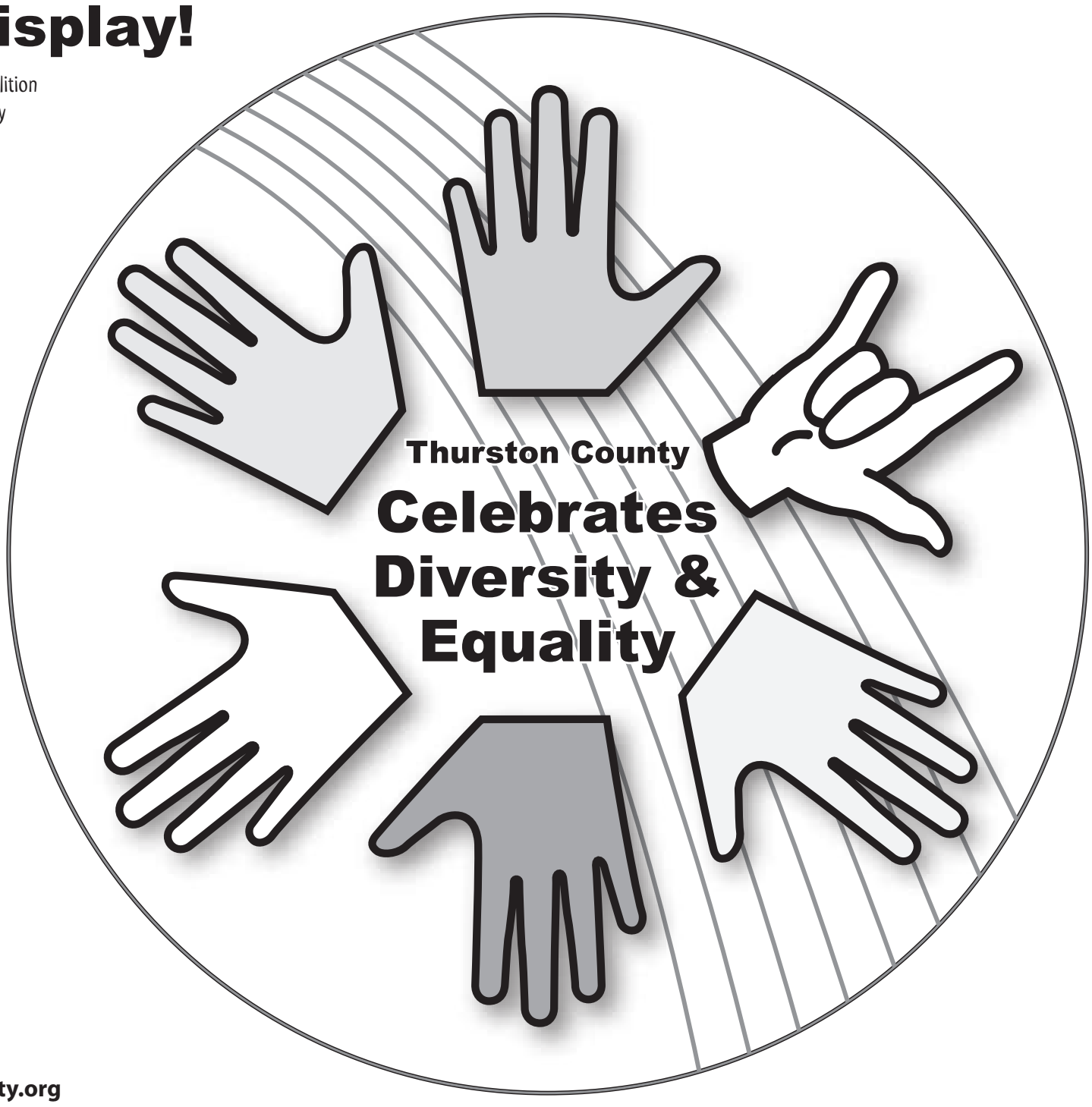
# Color and Display!

Unity in the Community is an Olympia-based coalition dedicated to organizing positive and pro-diversity educational events and appropriate community responses to the growing Nazi presence in the Olympia area. Unity seeks to build working relationships with a broad range of ethnic and cultural organizations, faith groups, progressive organizations, government entities and individuals who support diversity and equality as an essential basis for a strong community.

*Unity in the Community* is a growing coalition including members of the following groups: Japanese American Citizen's League, Olympia Movement for Justice and Peace, Capital City Pride, Temple Beth Hatfiloh, Thurston County Tenants' Union, Olympia Food Co-op, Stonewall Youth, Community Youth Services, Fellowship of Reconciliation, United Communities AIDS Network, Washington State Human Rights Commission, Washington State Labor Council, Bread & Roses, Olympia Downtown Association… to name just a few.

We are looking to work with all local organizations and individuals who support diversity and seek to counter messages of hate with a strong declaration of "Unity in the Community." If interested in joining this effort, please contact us or consider attending one of our educational events.

**www.olympiaunityinthecommunity.org**



# Real Security = Human Rights for All

**by Erin Genia**

*On March 11, 150 people participated in the "Real Security for All" demonstration in Tacoma, which linked the injustices of US immigration and deportation policies with our aggressive foreign policy, including the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Participants marched from the Northwest Detention Center to the Pacific Northwest National Security Forum, a military conference focused on the future of the armed forces. Erin Genia, the coordinator of Olympia Amnesty International and one of the event's organizers, gave the following speech at the demonstration. –Alice Zillah, an organizer of "Real Security for All"*

Thank you to all who came out today to lend your voices to the struggle for human rights and peace.

The "war on terror" has, in the name of security, eroded basic human rights. Human rights are our birthright, and no state can take them away from us, even during times of national emergency.

Real security is a product of a world where all the people of the earth enjoy human rights to the fullest extent. How can we get to a place of security when so many inequities exist for so many all over? There is no security when a person fears to practice their religion; when someone cannot petition their government without fear of retribution; when a person is arbitrarily detained for the color of their skin; or when people don't feel free to nonviolently express who they are.

There is no real security when corporations hold sway over our democracy, when governments restrict freedom of information in the media, when an uncountable number of mothers, children, families, and individuals struggle to survive – while our leaders feed off the greed of too much wealth and plenty.

Why is it so easy for so many of those in power to ignore human rights for all? Their power has blinded them. But we must remind them of their responsibility to the rest of humanity.

Since September 11, in the so-called "global struggle against violent extremism," serious violations to these rights have occurred. They have been justified in the name of fighting terrorism.

The US leads by example, and in this "war on terror," we have reversed the trend of promoting human rights all over the world, by perpetrating detentions without trial, discriminatory legislation, and harsher conditions of detainment which deny access to lawyers and family.

Unfair trials are commonplace. Where the presumption of innocence no longer exists, many civilians have been tried by military courts or in secret hearings. Secrecy within our government has flourished. The death penalty has been expanded. Rights of asylum-seekers have been denied. Mass deportations have ensued, sometimes to countries which practice torture. Racial profiling and discrimination are routine.

Now, citizens of the US and the world face restrictions on freedom of assembly and association, restrictions on freedom of expression and religion, increased power of security forces to conduct surveillance and searches. Torture with impunity is a matter of policy from Afghanistan to Iraq to Guantánamo to many other facilities worldwide, including secret CIA "Black Sites" in which US officials can handle detainees with their "gloves off" outside of the public eye. Confessions extracted under torture are used as evidence. Extraordinary rendition, where suspects are sent to countries that torture, is happening right now.

All of these injustices make no progress towards true security. They have made us less secure. Citizens are fearful, terrified even – not just of terrorists – but also of our government which has dismantled the rule of law.

The "war on terror" has become a war *of* terror.

When I think of all these things occurring in the name of security or freedom, it makes me realize that we have a lot of work to do to let people know that the reality of this so-called "secure" world, has actually made us less free, and in fact, we lose more basic rights everyday.

If security is measured by our freedom, what freedoms will we be left with once this long war, this war without end, this so-called "war on terror" is done?

Things are changing fast. It's dangerous when our country acts unilaterally without the support of the rest of the world, and in violation of international laws. It's dangerous when our country allies with countries that unapologetically violate human rights.

If we truly respect human dignity, let us embrace all the people of the world, and make people our priority. Let us start with a just, peaceful resolution of these conflicts.

Despite the anxiety of living in a world which has become a whirlwind of devastating and crushing events, I am heartened to see regular folks speak out and actively work together to help each other. There are so many amazing people who have given their lives to make human rights a reality for future generations, and people who continue to inspire more and more folks to do the right thing – stand up for our fellow human beings.

We've got to keep working to end torture, end arbitrary detention, end attacks against all civilians by armed groups, support objectors to this war, challenge the USA Patriot Act, support political asylum for refugees, oppose sending suspects to nations that torture, uphold trials for war crimes and the international criminal court structure, and reaffirm our obligation to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

I'd like to end with the words of Chief Joseph (Hinmatoyalatkekt) of the Nez Perce. He said:

*Treat all men alike. Give them all the same law. Give them all an even chance to live and grow. All men were made by the same Great Spirit, they are all brothers. The Earth is the mother of all people, and all people should have equal rights upon it...Let me be a free man, free to travel, free to stop, free to work, free to trade... where I choose my own teachers, free to follow the religion of my fathers, free to think and talk and act for myself, and I will obey every law, or submit to the penalty.*

## Want to know if the government is spying on you?

**Use www.FOIArequest.org to find out!**

Under the **Freedom of Information Act** (FOIA), anyone has the right to request information from the government. Last strengthened by Congress in response to the Watergate scandal, FOIA gives citizens a way to demand transparency from the Bush administration – and take the government to court if necessary.

The Bush administration is trying to keep the details of its illegal domestic surveillance program under wraps, even refusing to say how many Americans they've eavesdropped on. Many Americans – especially those with family and friends abroad – are wondering whether government agents have been listening to their phone conversations or reading their email.

If you're worried this has happened to you, **People For the American Way** has created a new tool:

**www.FOIArequest.org**

You can file a Freedom of Information Act request quickly, accurately, and easily.

We can't guarantee that the Bush administration will disclose all this information in compliance with the law, but we can help you through the process. By filing a FOIA request, you will send a strong signal that American citizens believe in the rule of law and aren't afraid to stand up to the President when he violates the Constitution!

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Peter Schumann and his internationally known theatre troupe, Bread & Puppet, made a rare appearance at the "Real Security for All" rally and march in Tacoma. (Photo by Robert Whitlock)

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WIP WORKS IN PROGRESS
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Volume 16, No. 12

# WORKS IN PROGRESS

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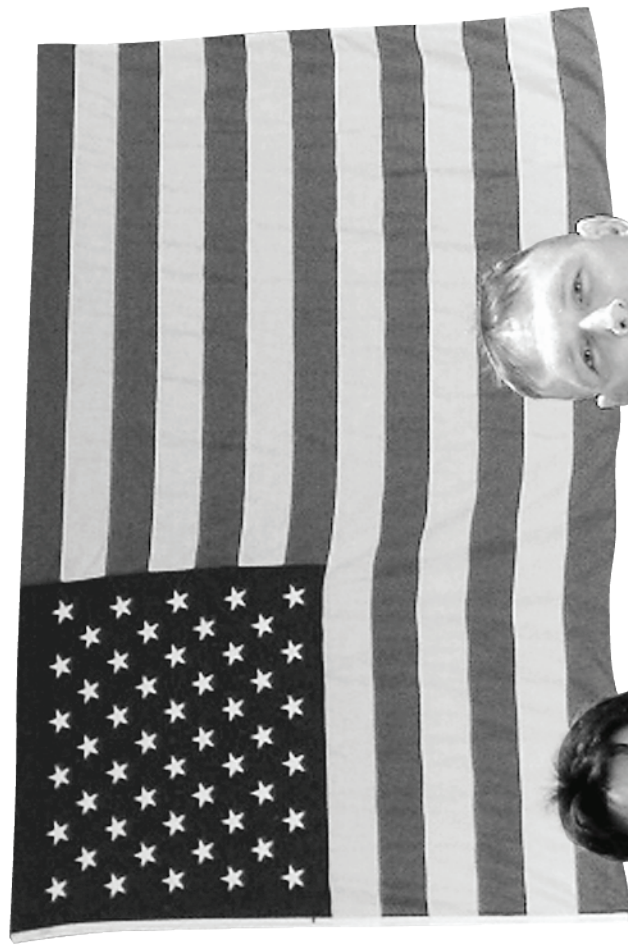

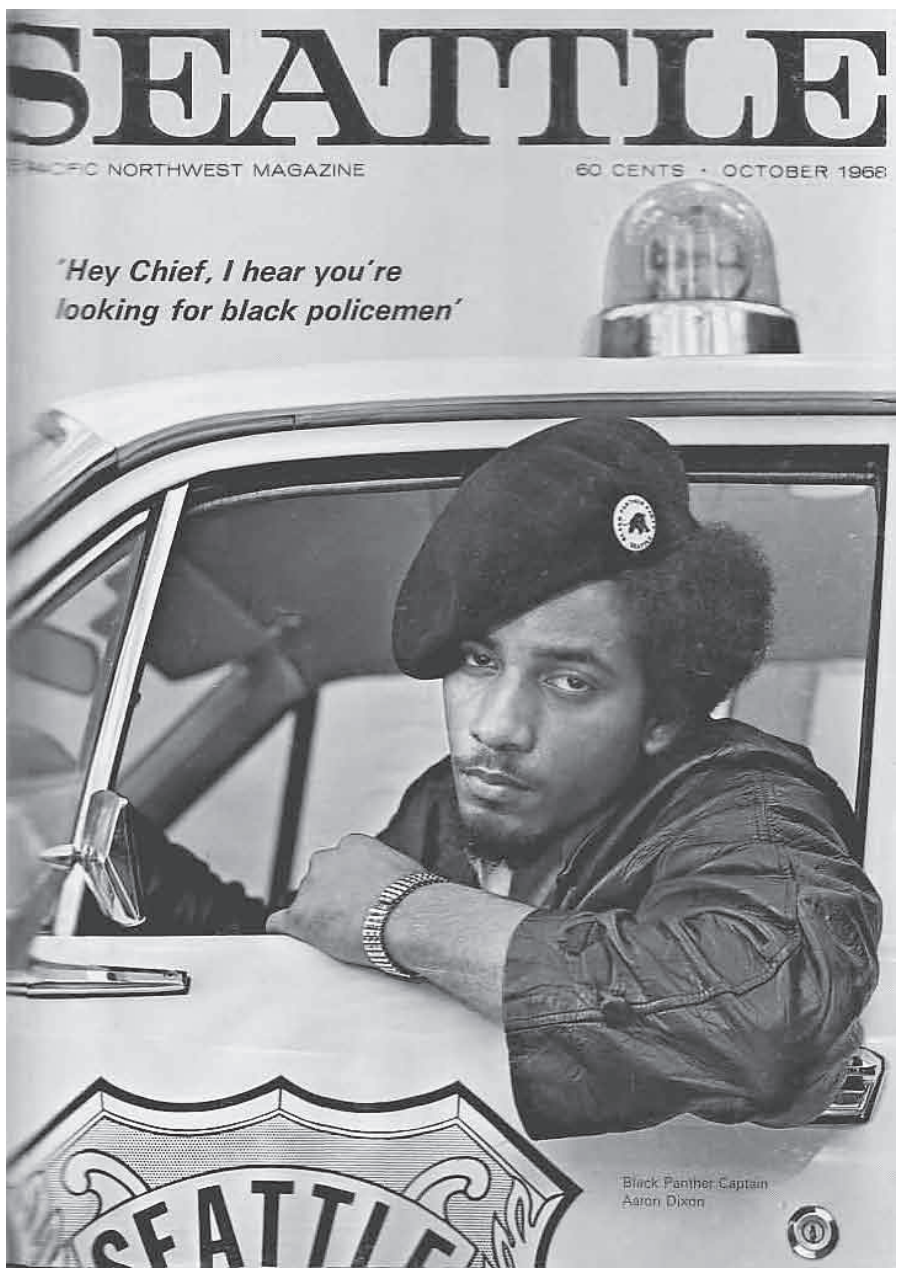
SEATTLE
PACIFIC NORTHWEST MAGAZINE
60 CENTS · OCTOBER 1968
'Hey Chief, I hear you're looking for black policemen'
Black Panther Captain Aaron Dixon

**Aaron Dixon** featured on the cover of *Seattle* magazine, October 1968.
*See story on page 4.*

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